

# ANSWERING ISKCON

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## Why the verse 16.8 cannot be used against Advaita Vedanta Part 2

december 21, 2021 by publisher, posted in arguments against iskcon, bhagavat gita related arguments

I have answered mainly the tenacity of the author in the last part and also, why even if Advaitins interpret Asatyam as not literally unreal it is not a wrong approach. Now there is one more point that ought to be highlighted here, the author has quoted the following from Shankara Bhashyam as well as Swami Gambhirananda's translation of it

“असत्यं यथा वयम् अनृतप्रायाः तथा इदं जगत् सर्वम् असत्यम्

“Te, they, the domoniacal persons; ahuh, say; that the jagat, world; is asatyam, unreal-as we ourselves are prone to falsehood, so is this whole world unreal.”

Additionally he uses the following screenshot,

**16.8 They say that the world is unreal, it has no basis, it is without a God. It is born of mutual union brought about by passion! What other (cause can there be)?**

**English Translation of Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary - Swami Gambhirananda**

**16.8 Te, they, the domoniacal persons; ahuh, say; that the jagat, world; is asatyam, unreal-as we ourselves are prone to falsehood, so is this whole world unreal; apratistham, it has no basis, it does**

But this screen shot of quote does not do justification, you may ask why ? Since this is what the Shankara Bhashyam and Swami Gambhirananda's translation state

“एव प्राणिनां कारणम् इति लोकायतिकदृष्टिः इयम्॥

Certainly, the passion of living beings is the cause of the world. This is the view of the materialists.”

Here लोकायतिक means Charvaka. So does any Charvaka see the world as unreal ? In fact for the Charvaka this world is real, even Shankara knows this so Asatyam means the following as per Shankara also

असत्यम् - यस्य परमसत्येन सहा कोपि सम्बन्धं न वर्तते न भवति ।

I have simply explained this in Samskrutam, it means that which is in no way related to the ultimate reality that is Asatyam. So for the Charvaka the world has no ultimate basis for it, it stands on it's own it is अपरस्परसम्बूतं - mutual cause and effect between elements. Hence अनीश्वरम्, without a Lord or God. This particular verse is not directed towards even the sophisticated Atheists, but mainly towards crass gross materialism. It is not even directed towards Jainism or Buddhism since both Siddhantas insist on strict austerity. So where is the question of including them as well ? Charvaka was a sort of crass and gross materialism present in those days, we do not have that kind of materialism present today in a major way, in fact many Atheists believe in helping

others. Buddhists also insist on helping and developing character, so how can these verses apply to them ? Therefore to insist that Buddhists and Jains are critiqued here has no meaning. So what is being critiqued is crass and gross materialism which though present even today in minority is not the contention of the majority of materialists. The argument of Iskconites is that this has to be applied to Advaitins, since their main target is Advaitins and Advaita Vedanta alone.

If however Iskconites insist that calling the world Mithya is Asuric knowledge then they face a major problem here , since Bhagavatam calls this world dream like

## ŚB 10.14.22

तस्मादिदं जगदशेषमस्त्वरूपं  
स्वप्नाभमस्तथिषणं पुरुदुःखदुःखम् ।  
त्वयेव नित्यसुखबोधतनावनन्ते  
मायात उद्यदपि यत् सदिवावभाति ॥ २२ ॥

## TRANSLATION

Therefore this entire universe, which like a dream is by nature unreal, nevertheless appears real, and thus it covers one's consciousness and assails one with repeated miseries. This universe appears real because it is manifested by the potency of illusion emanating from You, whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of eternal happiness and knowledge.

One can refer the translation from Iskcon's own website

<https://vedabase.io/en/library/sb/10/14/22/>

Also we find the following

## ŚB 11.7.7

यदिदं मनसा वाचा चक्षुभ्यो श्रवणादिभिः ।  
नश्वरं गृह्यमाणं च विद्धि मायामनोमयम् ॥ ७ ॥

## TRANSLATION

**My dear Uddhava, the material universe that you perceive through your mind, speech, eyes, ears and other senses is an illusory creation that one imagines to be real due to the influence of māyā. In fact, you should know that all of the objects of the material senses are temporary.**

This translation also you can find in Iskcon's own website

<https://vedabase.io/en/library/sb/11/7/7/>

We will look at another verse

## ŚB 11.11.2

शोकमोहौ सुखं दुःखं देहापतिश्च मायया ।  
स्वप्नो यथात्मनः ख्यातिः संसृतिर्न तु वास्तवी ॥ २ ॥

## TRANSLATION

**Just as a dream is merely a creation of one's intelligence but has no actual substance, similarly, material lamentation, illusion, happiness, distress and the acceptance of the material body under the influence of māyā are all creations of My illusory energy. In other words, material existence has no essential reality.**

This can also be found in their own website

<https://vedabase.io/en/library/sb/11/11/2/>

We will take one more verse and conclude this part

## SB 10.87.37

na yad idam agra asa na bhavisyad ato nidhanad anu mitam antara tvayi vibhati  
mrsaika-raseata upamiyate dravina-jati-vikalpa-pathair vitatha-mano-vilasam rtam  
ity avayanty abudhah

**Translation:** Since this universe did not exist prior to its creation and will no longer exist after its annihilation, we conclude that in the interim it is nothing more than a manifestation imagined to be visible within You, whose spiritual enjoyment never changes. We liken this universe to the transformation of various material substances

into diverse forms. Certainly those who believe that this figment of the imagination is substantially real are less intelligent.

This can also be found in their own link

## Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 10, Chapter 87, Text 37



Srimad Bhagavatam Class

I will answer this further in another part.

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